

**From:** "Jim Beale"

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**Subject:** Study on Credit Bureaus Handling of Disputes

Comments on Docket No. OP-1209: for the Study on Investigations of Disputed Consumer Information Reported to Consumer Reporting Agencies.

I personally have found it to be very frustrating and difficult to have inaccurate information removed or corrected on my credit reports. It appears that when I contact the credit reporting agencies informing them of inaccurate data they simply send something on to the creditor. If the creditor simply says it's OK, the credit reporting agency believes them (regardless of supporting documents I may have sent) and refuses to even investigate it again for me. This has happened more than once over the past few years.

Here's one example. About 2 years ago a credit card company raised my interest rate to 28% because I was delinquent on another creditor's account. I knew that wasn't true, so I got a copy of my credit report. There was a collection agency showing a \$200 debt. I had never heard of the collection agency. I told the credit reporting agency this. A few weeks later they simply informed me that the collection agency confirmed the debt. I wrote a letter to the collection agency asking for proof of this delinquency only to get a form letter back telling me I owed them \$200. I did manage to learn that a hospital was the original "creditor". I knew that I didn't owe them any money, so wrote them a letter. EVENTUALLY the hospital agreed that they had made a mistake and would tell the collection agency. They had not even tried to contact me before turning this over to the collection agency--they could EASILY have contacted me, but they never even tried... Well, about 3 months after I discovered the "error" on my credit report, it finally was removed from the credit report (but I'm STILL being charged the 28%!). Why should I have to go through ALL this hassle to clean up someone else's sloppiness on my credit report? In my mind, neither the credit reporting agency nor the collection agency put out any effort to VERIFY the data even when I TOLD THEM IT WAS WRONG--shouldn't the burden of proof be on them rather than me?

This case was a blatantly false delinquency report. There have been a few other inaccuracies that I have tried to deal with, but ran into very similar situations. Again, the credit reporting agencies are the big, impersonal companies who have absolutely no real reason to want to believe the average person (in other words, they aren't even in a position where they may lose a customer if they don't treat a person fairly!). We need to really update the laws and regulations to put the consumer in control of their personal data--at least put much more of the burden of proof on companies who report the data. Humans do make mistakes, but there possibly also needs to be some real form of "compensation" to consumers in situations such as the one I describe (the "threat" of having to actually pay out significant money would probably be a genuine deterrent to sloppy accounting, lazy collections and reporting as well as the "it's not our problem" attitude of the credit reporting agencies and collection agencies involved.

Thanks for considering these comments.

Jim Beale